

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request entry of the following amendments and remarks contained herein in response to the Office Action mailed May 7, 2007. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment and remarks contained herein place the instant application in condition for allowance.

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1 – 12 are pending. More specifically, Applicants amend claims 10 – 12. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

I. Examiner Interview

Applicants first wish to express their sincere appreciation for the time that Examiner Lai and Examiner Ho spent with Applicants' Attorney, Anthony Bonner, during a telephone discussion on July 17, 2007 regarding the outstanding Office Action. During that conversation, Examiner Lai and Mr. Bonner discussed potential arguments and amendments with regard to claim 1, in view of *Srivastava*. The general thrust of the potential principal arguments included a discussion of at least one embodiment of the present application disclosing that each indicator is configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that Examiner Lai carefully consider this response and the amendments.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action indicates that claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. More specifically, claim 9 recites "each user represents a unique individual." Additionally, on page 24, line 6 the present application states "one email message is received at Moe's individual user email mailbox, and the other email message is received at

Curly's individual user email mailbox." As illustrated in this passage (and elsewhere in the present application), Curly and Moe may be viewed as unique individuals, as recited in claim 9. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that claim 9 is allowable.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

A. Claim 1 is Allowable Over *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava*

The Office Action indicates that claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,226,670 ("*Ueno*") in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,374,292 ("*Srivastava*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reason that *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the elements of claim 1. More specifically, claim 1 recites:

A communication system comprising:
a client-side group email folder accessible by each user in a predefined group of users; and
a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, ***each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message.***
(emphasis added)

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over the cited art for at least the reason that the cited art fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a "communication system comprising... a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, ***each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message***" as recited in claim 1. More specifically, *Ueno* discloses a "mail receptor [that] may accumulate the received E-mail in all of the personal mail spool associated with the group mail address corresponding to the arrival address" (column 3,

line 29). Applicants respectfully submit that a personal mail spool that is associated with a group email address is different than an indicator on a group email message that is configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted on the group email message. For at least this reason, claim 1 is allowable.

Additionally, *Srivastava* fails to overcome the deficiencies of *Ueno*. More specifically, *Srivastava* discloses “[i]n addition to the reference, the individual message’s status (new, unread, replied to, deleted, and the like) is maintained per mailbox” (column 5, line 5). Applicants respectfully submit that this is different than the elements of claim 1, for at least the reason that *Srivastava* appears to disclose that the individual message’s status is maintained (e.g., the message has been read by somebody). However, *Srivastava* does not appear to disclose “a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, ***each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message***” as recited in claim 1. For at least this additional reason, claim 1 is allowable

B. Claim 10 is Allowable Over *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava*

The Office Action indicates that claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,226,670 (“*Ueno*”) in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,374,292 (“*Srivastava*”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reason that *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the elements of claim 10. More specifically, claim 10 recites:

A communication method comprising:
providing indicators in a group email message, the group email message being located in an inbox, each indicator corresponding to one of the users in a predefined group of users, each indicator having a setting, ***each indicator configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message***; and
changing the setting of one indicator in response to the email

message being acted upon by its corresponding user.
(*emphasis added*)

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10, as amended, is allowable over the cited art for at least the reason that the cited art fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a “communication system comprising... a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, ***each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message***” as recited in claim 10, as amended. More specifically, *Ueno* discloses a “mail receptor [that] may accumulate the received E-mail in all of the personal mail spool associated with the group mail address corresponding to the arrival address” (column 3, line 29). Applicants respectfully submit that a personal mail spool that is associated with a group email address is different than an indicator on a group email message that is configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted on the group email message. For at least this reason, claim 10, as amended, is allowable.

Additionally, *Srivastava* fails to overcome the deficiencies of *Ueno*. More specifically, *Srivastava* discloses “[i]n addition to the reference, the individual message’s status (new, unread, replied to, deleted, and the like) is maintained per mailbox” (column 5, line 5). Applicants respectfully submit that this is different than the elements of claim 10, as amended, for at least the reason that *Srivastava* appears to disclose that the individual message’s status is maintained (e.g., the message has been read by somebody). However, *Srivastava* does not appear to disclose “a group email message in the client-side group email folder, the group email message having indicators, ***each indicator corresponding to a user in the predefined group of users, each indicator being configured to indicate whether the corresponding user has acted upon the group email message***” as recited in claim 10, as amended. For at least this additional reason, claim 10, as amended, is allowable

C. Claims 2 – 8 and 11 – 12 are Allowable Over *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava*

The Office Action indicates that claims 2 – 8 and 11 – 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,226,670 ("*Ueno*") in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,374,292 ("*Srivastava*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reason that *Ueno* in view of *Srivastava* fails to disclose, teach, or suggest all of the elements of claims 2 – 8 and 11 – 12. More specifically, dependent claims 2 – 8 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that these claims depend from allowable independent claim 1. Further, dependent claims 11 – 12 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowable independent claim 10. *In re Fine, Minnesota Mining and Mfg.Co. v. Chemque, Inc.*, 303 F.3d 1294, 1299 (Fed. Cir. 2002).

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested.

Any other statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly addressed herein are not intended to be admitted. In addition, any and all findings of inherency are traversed as not having been shown to be necessarily present. Furthermore, any and all findings of well-known art and Official Notice, or statements interpreted similarly, should not be considered well-known for the particular and specific reasons that the claimed combinations are too complex to support such conclusions and because the Office Action does not include specific findings predicated on sound technical and scientific reasoning to support such conclusions.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,

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